



### **Lanzarote 30 October - 11 November 2007**

Essentially a family holiday and not a birding trip as such. No telescope, just binoculars – although I did use a 2x “booster” during one of the short seawatches from Punta Pechiguera. Transport was a hired mountain bike which was used for all trips except for the Teguisse day when a hire car was used. Most (birding) days were between 07:00 and 09:30, and I was not out birding every day.

Once again stayed in Playa Blanca and would thoroughly recommend it for families.

I had stayed in Playa Blanca previously in December 1997 and January 2004 and the rate of development is still alarming – once again an incredible amount of building has gone on since my previous visit. Remarkably at least one Houbara Bustard is hanging on north of Punta Pechiguera / west of Montana Rojo, although it was hard to find. Almost the entire seafront as far as the lighthouse at Punta Pechiguera is now built up and although this has been done very tastefully it can only be detrimental to the birds and other local wildlife; there has also been massive expansion towards the east.

There may be one upside to this massive development – the irrigated areas around the developments now provide more refuge for migrants.



**Figure 1 Yellow Wagtail feeding on hotel lawn on Playa Blanca beach front**



**Figure 2 Southern Grey Shrike, one of the most widespread species on Lanzarote**

Cream-coloured Courser were once again very hard to find and on this trip were only found on the plains south west of Teguisse. This was also the only place I connected with Stone Curlew and the first one I saw was freshly dead on the road.

The Salinas de Janubio were in full production, although I never made it as far as the landward (and most actively worked) saltpans. It was here the best birds of the trip was seen – two Slender-billed Gulls on my first visit, reducing to only one a couple of days later. These represent only the third record for Lanzarote. One of these birds was ringed, although I never managed to read off the number. Tragically for me my best photos of these rarities were on a memory card that later became corrupted.....



**Figure 3 Slender-billed Gulls**



**Figure 4 Slender-billed Gull**

Unfortunately I had a rather off-putting experience on my last day at Salina de Janubio when I was ordered to leave the area by a ranger. This was because I was using “professional” camera equipment without a permit. Despite making some enquiries I have not yet been able to find out anything about this permit, how to get hold of one or where one may photograph without such permission. Why such a permit is required in the first place is a mystery to me – it should be possible to photograph wintering waders and larks at will.



**Figure 5 Red Knot at Salinas de Janubio - the last picture I took before being thrown out of the area**

It was not as easy during this visit to see the Houbara's west of Teguisse with only a few singles and a flock of three noted. The birds were in the north of the area (nearer Soo) in the more arid wasteland rather than in the more actively cultivated areas. This may have been to a Microlite aircraft which flew over the south of the area several times during the morning I was there. I do not know whether this is a regular occurrence or not.

All in all at least 51 species were recorded – my best result in Lanzarote thus far. Best birds were perhaps the Slender-billed Gulls at Salina de Janubio.

**Itinery:**

31 October	Salina de Janubio
01 November	Punta Pechiguera
02 November	Plains SW of Teguisse / El Jable
03 November	Very brief (and late) visit to Salina de Janubio
04 November	East of Playa Blanca (Playa Mujeres etc)
06 November	Salina de Janubio
07 November	Punta Pechiguera / El Rubicon
09 November	Playa Mujera / north and east of Playa Blanca
11 November	Salina de Janubio (visit cut short by authorities)

A systematic list of the 51 species noted is presented overleaf.



Explanation of numbers in the following list:

- \* less than 10
- \*\* tens
- \*\*\* hundreds

English	Scientific	Numbers	Comments
Cory's Shearwater	<i>Calonectris diomedea</i>	***	Up to 500 off Punta Pecheuga, smaller numbers elsewhere
Northern Gannet	<i>Sula bassana</i>	*	Two fishing north of El Rubicon 07.11.07
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	*	8-10 present on plains west of Teguisse 1-4 seen almost daily along coast near Playa Blanca
Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	*	1-4 seen almost daily along coast near Playa Blanca
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinera</i>	*	One apparently in off the sea at Playa Blanca 30.10.07
Eurasian Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>	*	Common everywhere
Common Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	**	One over Playa Blanca 08.11.07
Barbary Falcon	<i>Falco pelegrinoides</i>	*	
Houbara Bustard	<i>Chlamydotis undulate</i>	*	4+ west of Teguisse, 1-4 North of Playa Blanca
Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	*	One at Salinas de Janubio 31.10-03.11
Black-winged Stilt	<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	**	30+ at Salinas de Janubio
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i>	**	Common near Soo
Cream-coloured Courser	<i>Cursorius cursor</i>	*	At least 6 on plains west of Teguisse Up to 30+ at Salinas de Janubio. Singles elsewhere.
Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>	**	
Kentish Plover	<i>Charadrius alexandrius</i>	*	Up to 5 at Salinas de Janubio 1-2 at various places, most regular at Salinas de Janubio
Grey Plover	<i>Pluvalis squatarola</i>	*	One at Salinas de Janubio 11.11.07
Red Knot	<i>Calidris canutus</i>	*	20+ at Salinas de Janubio 06.11.07
Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	**	1 at Salinas de Janubio 06.11.07
Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	*	1 at Salinas de Janubio 06.11.07
Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Caladris ferruginea</i>	*	1 at Salinas de Janubio 06.11.07
Dunlin	<i>Calidris alpine</i>	*	1 at Salinas de Janubio 06.11.07
Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	**	A few noted most days
Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	*	1 at Salinas de Janubio on all visits
Common Redshank	<i>Tringa tetanus</i>	**	15-20 at Salinas de Janubio
Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	**	15-20 at Salinas de Janubio
Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	**	Common on all shorelines Common on all shorelines. Flock of 30+ at Salinas de Janubio
Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	**	
Black-headed Gull	<i>Larus ridebodus</i>	*	1-3 seen at Salinas de Janubio on most visits
Slender-billed Gull	<i>Larus</i>	*	2 at Salinas de Janubio 31.10.07, 1 on 03.11.07
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>	*	A few resting with other gulls west of Teguisse
Yellow-legged Gull	<i>Larus cachinnans</i>	***	Very common everywhere
Sandwich Tern	<i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>	**	Common along all coasts
Rock dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	**	Near Timanafaya at the camel rides
Eurasian Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	**	Abundant in resort of Playa Blanca
European Turtle	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	*	3 seen on outskirts of Playa Blanca 09.11



English	Scientific	Numbers	Comments
Dove			
Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>	*	A few seen west of Teguse and at Salinas de Janubio
Lesser Short-toed Lark	<i>Calandrella rufescens</i>	***	Huge flock(s) west of Teguse. Smaller numbers everywhere else
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	**	Up to 15 at Salinas de Janubio and east of Playa Blanca
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	*	1-5 in hotel gardens at Playa Blanca
Berthelot's pipit	<i>Anthus berthelotti</i>	**	Common everywhere
Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>	*	One in hotel gardens at Playa Blanca 08.11
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	*	1-3 daily at Playa Blanca
White / Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>	**	Noted on several occasions, including 6 at Salinas de Janubio
European Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	*	Several overwintering throughout the resort of Playa Blanca
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelus</i>	*	Several seemingly overwintering throughout the resort of Playa Blanca
Spectacled Warbler	<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i>	*	Mainly recorded around car park behind Playa Mujera
Great Grey Shrike	<i>Lanius excubitor</i>	**	Very common most places outside the resorts
Common Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	**	Up to 23 at Playa Blanca, one near Soo
Spanish Sparrow	<i>Passer hispaniolensis</i>	***	Common throughout Playa Blanca, confined to resort areas
Common Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	**	Small flocks around Playa Blanca
Trumpeter Finch	<i>Bucanetes githagineus</i>	**	Several flocks of 10+ east of Playa Blanca, smaller numbers elsewhere



Figure 6 Northern Gannet, a winter visitor in small numbers to Lanzarote



**Figure 7 Stone Curlew, a reasonably common on the plains south-west of Teguisse**



**Figure 8 Ruddy Turnstone, probably the most numerous wader on Lanzarote**

More pictures from this trip can be found on [www.naturalbornbirder.com](http://www.naturalbornbirder.com)

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